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VEGETABLES



FLORIDA
AGRICULTURE

SPRING ACREAGE (April, May, June, July)

April 9, 2001

FLORIDA

WEATHER: Freezing temperatures dipped down into the southern Peninsula as the New Year arrived with lowest readings coming on New Year’s Eve, New Year’s Day and late in the first week of 2001. Some Homestead and Immokalee crops not protected by freeze covers or irrigation suffered significant damage from this freeze. Cool temperatures throughout January slowed plant growth and fruit development with supplies of many crops significantly below normal. January temperatures averaged one to six degrees below normal. January rainfall ranged from a third inch to almost four inches below normal. Milder conditions during February allowed some acreage to recover from the freeze damages. February temperatures averaged four to almost eight degrees above normal while precipitation totals ranged from two and a half to five and a quarter inches below normal. Storms during March brought welcomed rains to many Peninsula localities but strong winds caused some foliage damage with blowing sand scarring some fruit. The March rain totals ranged from one and a half inches below normal to over seven inches above. Cloud cover during storms kept March temperatures below normal for a few days but clear skies during most of the month caused monthly average temperatures to hover around normal levels. The mostly dry weather during the first three months of 2001 kept the threat of wild fires at dangerous levels with drought conditions persisting throughout the period.

This report reflects conditions as of April 1 and represents acreage for harvest during the spring months of April, May, June, and July. Estimated acreage for harvest by growing areas is presented in order: area, previous year (2000), current year (2001).

SNAP BEANS: The snap bean crop is in mostly good condition. Planting of the spring crop is virtually complete. Harvest is active in southern areas with good quality and volume available. (All areas, 15,000, 15,000)

CABBAGE: The cabbage crop is all planted. Harvest is active in the central and northern areas. Harvest is winding down in the southern areas. The crop is in fair to good condition. Head quality and size are generally good. (All areas, 4,000, 5,500)

SWEET CORN: Acreage in the Everglades region suffered heavy damage during the New Year’s freeze with growers replanting plants killed by the cold. Dade County producers planted corn in some abandoned potato fields during late January and finished all planting by early February. Southwestern growers finished planting during early February when Zellwood producers began planting in the Apopka area. Everglades producers wound down planting by mid-March when picking of a limited acreage that recovered from the freeze began. Strong winds around mid-March damaged some leaves in southern Peninsula localities with plants expected to recover. Cool

temperatures at the end of March slowed crop development in the Zellwood area with producers expecting spring crop picking to begin during the first week of May. (Everglades, 20,600, 20,200; Central, 1,500, 1,200; North, 2,050, 1,900; other, 1,650, 2,100; all areas, 25,800, 25,400)

CUCUMBERS: Planting of the spring crop is winding down. Harvesting is active in the southern areas. The crop is in fair to good condition. Growth and development are normal. The quality of the harvested fruit is fair to good. (All areas, 4,300, 3,800)

EGGPLANT: Crop condition is fair to mostly good with normal growth and development. (All areas, 500, 400)

BELL PEPPERS: Growers used freeze covers to protect a lot of acreage from the New Year’s freeze. This freeze caused some leafburn to unprotected plants while strong winds that followed increased bloom and small fruit drop. Producers in the West Central area began planting during the last week of January and finished after mid-March. Southwestern growers completed planting after mid-February. Cool temperatures during January and part of March slowed plant growth and fruit maturation. Harvesting in the Southwest and East Coast areas continued throughout the first three months of the year with supplies down due to adverse weather. East Coast producers finished spring crop planting in late March. (Southwest, 2,800, 2,700; Central, 2,650, 3,100; East Coast, 1,050, 1,000; all areas, 6,500, 6,800)

TOMATOES: Temperatures near freezing during the New Year’s holiday caused significant damage to foliage with some fruit frozen in the Immokalee area. Dade County growers ran overhead sprinklers as protection from this cold weather. Strong winds accompanying the freeze increased bloom and fruit drop with winter crop supplies significantly lower than normal. Cool weather during January and part of March delayed plant growth and fruit maturation. Strong winds that followed welcomed showers near mid-March in the Southwest and Palmetto-Ruskin areas, broke some stems and caused some leaves to fall off plants with blowing sand scarring some fruit. Dade County producers finished transplanting in late January while growers around Immokalee finished during late February. Growers in the Quincy area started planting about mid-March with transplanting ending in the East Coast and Palmetto-Ruskin regions during late March. In late March, southern Peninsula producers started to pick acreage planted after the New Year’s freeze. (Palmetto-Ruskin, 7,250, 8,200; Southwest, 1,850, 4,700; East Coast, 1,450, 1,950; other 2,150, 2,950; all areas, 12,700, 17,800)

WATERMELONS: The crop is in fair to good condition. Recent storms in the Palmetto-Ruskin area flooded some acreage with the amount of damage currently being assessed. Planting in northern areas expected to start shortly. (All areas, 27,000, 24,000)

UNITED STATES

The prospective area for harvest of 13 selected fresh market vegetables during the spring quarter is forecast at 230,300 acres, up 8 percent from last year. Acreage increases for broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, head lettuce, bell peppers, and tomatoes more than offset decreases for snap beans, sweet corn, cucumbers, and

eggplant. Acreage for escarole/endive remained the same. Acreage for spring harvest of 3 selected melons is forecast at 89,300 acres, down 9 percent from last year. Cantaloupe, honeydews, and watermelon were down 4, 9, and 12 percent, respectively.

Vegetables for fresh market, prospective acreage for harvest, spring quarter by States, 2001 with comparisons					
Selected crops and States	Usual harvest period	Spring acreage			2001 area for harvest as percent of 2000
		Harvested		For harvest 2001	
		1999	2000		
		Acres		Percent	
SNAP BEANS:					
Florida	Apr-Jun	14,000	15,000	15,000	100
Georgia	Apr-Jun	7,000	8,200	7,500	91
New Jersey	Jun-Jul	1,300	1,300	1,600	123
South Carolina ^{1/}	May-Aug	1,100	--	--	--
Total		23,400	24,500	24,100	98
CABBAGE:					
Florida	Apr-Jun	1,600	4,000	5,500	138
Georgia	Apr-Jun	4,200	3,800	4,200	111
New Jersey	May-Aug	900	900	1,000	111
Texas	Apr-Jun	800	600	1,000	167
Total		7,500	9,300	11,700	126
SWEET CORN:					
Florida ^{2/}	Apr-Jul	28,000	25,800	25,400	98
California	Apr-Jun	11,000	11,000	11,000	100
Total		39,000	36,800	36,400	99
CUCUMBERS:					
Florida	Apr-Jun	5,300	4,300	3,800	88
South Carolina	May-Aug	1,000	900	1,100	122
Texas	Apr-Jun	600	400	300	75
Total		6,900	5,600	5,200	93
EGGPLANT:					
Florida	Apr-Jun	600	500	400	80
ESCAROLE/ENDIVE:					
Florida ^{3/}	Apr-Jun	400	300	--	--
New Jersey ^{3/}	May-Aug	400	400	--	--
Total		800	700	700	100
BELL PEPPERS: ^{4/}					
Florida ^{2/}	Apr-Jul	6,500	6,500	6,800	105
Texas	Apr-Jun	400	500	400	80
Total		6,900	7,000	7,200	103
TOMATOES:					
Florida ^{2/}	Apr-Jul	12,200	12,700	17,800	140
Alabama ^{1/}	Jun-Jul	600	--	--	--
Arkansas ^{1/}	Jun-Aug	750	--	--	--
California	Apr-Jun	8,000	8,200	7,500	91
South Carolina	May-Jul	3,600	3,400	3,200	94
Texas ^{1/}	Apr-Jun	1,600	--	--	--
Total		26,750	24,300	28,500	117
WATERMELON:					
Florida	Apr-Jun	35,000	27,000	24,000	89
Alabama ^{1/}	Jun-Jul	1,900	6,100	5,900	97
Arizona	May-Jul	6,100	--	--	--
California	Apr-Jun	4,200	3,000	3,000	100
Texas	Apr-Jun	21,000	22,000	18,000	82
Total		68,200	58,100	50,900	88
TOTAL OF CROPS LISTED					
Florida		103,600	96,100	98,700	103
United States		180,050	166,800	165,100	99
TOTAL OF CROPS ESTIMATED					
United States ^{5/}		336,450	312,500	319,600	102

^{1/} Seasonal estimate discontinued in 2000. Estimate to be published in January 2002 annual. ^{2/} 2000 State data revised. ^{3/} 2001 State data not published to avoid disclosure. ^{4/} Includes fresh market and processing. ^{5/} Total of crops listed plus broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, celery, head lettuce, cantaloups, and honeydew melons.